

# Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

### American Samoa

#### Profile of Drug Indicators

March 2003



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

## **American Samoa**

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

### **Demographics**

- Population: 57,291 (2000 Census)<sup>1</sup>
- Ethnicity: 1.1% white, 0.0% black/African American; 2.8% Asian; 91.6% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander; 0.2% some other race; 4.2% two or more races<sup>2</sup>
- Geography: American Samoa is located in Oceania, which is group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean, halfway between Hawaii and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup>

### **Politics**

- Governor: Tauese P. Sunia<sup>4</sup>
- Lt. Governor Togiola Tulafono<sup>5</sup>
- Attorney General: Fiti Sunia<sup>6</sup>
- U.S. House of Representatives: Eni F.H. Faleomavaega<sup>7</sup>
- Capital: Pago Pago<sup>8</sup>
- American Samoa is an unincorporated and unorganized territory of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

### **Programs/Initiatives**

- Teen Challenge Samoa<sup>10</sup>  
Established in 1997, Teen Challenge Samoa (TCSM) currently has 4 staff and 25 teens in the program. TCSM provides community-based drug education, prevention and restoration programs on a national and international basis.

### **Federal Funding**

- Drug-Free Communities Support Program grantees in American Samoa:<sup>11</sup>  
Since FY 1998 when funding was first available, American Samoa has not ever received funding for the Drug-Free Communities Support Program.
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Formula and Discretionary Grant summary for American Samoa:<sup>12</sup>
  - Formula Funding: \$614,318
    - Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant: \$286,512
    - Community Mental Health Services Block Grant: \$71,606
    - Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH): \$50,000
    - Protection and Advocacy Formula Grant: \$206,200
  - Discretionary Funding: \$50,000
    - Mental Health: \$50,000
    - Substance Prevention: \$0
    - Substance Abuse Treatment: \$0
  - Total Mental Health Funds: \$377,806
  - Total Substance Abuse Funds: \$286,512
  - Total Funds for American Samoa: \$664,318

- FY 2002 Byrne Formula Grant Program amount awarded to American Samoa: \$953,222<sup>13</sup>
- There were no grant recipients of the FY 2002 Office of Justice Programs Drug Court Grant in American Samoa.<sup>14</sup>
- FY 1996-2002 Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) for State Prisoners Formula Grant amount allocated to American Samoa:<sup>15</sup>
  - FY 1996: \$100,186
  - FY 1997: \$111,862
  - FY 1998: \$240,417
  - FY 1999: \$235,100
  - FY 2000: \$235,210
  - FY 2001: \$235,722
  - FY 2002: \$261,427
- There were no recipients in American Samoa of the FY 2002 Office of Community Oriented Policing and Services (COPS) Methamphetamine Grant.<sup>16</sup>
- There were no recipients in American Samoa of the FY 2001 Housing and Urban Development Drug Elimination Grant.<sup>17</sup>

### **Crime and Drug-Related Crime**

- Narcotic offenses in American Samoa have increased from 15 during 1996 to 34 during 2000.<sup>18</sup>

Number of Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, American Samoa, 1996-2000

Selected Offenses	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Arson	13	9	4	3	4
Assault (1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> )	389	418	449	381	316
Burglary	255	249	262	251	247
Criminal homicide	4	6	2	4	2
Forcible rape	15	6	12	16	13
Larceny	128	167	157	122	89
Motor vehicle theft	5	12	12	6	4
Robbery	7	6	12	3	2
DUI	188	124	121	158	207
Narcotics	15	15	22	29	34
Total offenses	2,666	3,389	3,428	3,151	2,784

- Local law enforcement officials attribute a rise in violent crime to the rising methamphetamine problem.<sup>19</sup>
- American Samoan authorities report that cannabis cultivation is a significant local problem.<sup>20</sup>
- According to a senior police officer in the drug unit, drug use in American Samoa has reached alarming levels. The police department averages six to seven drug busts a week, mostly in the Savalalo market area or at the flea markets and bus terminals. There has also been an escalation of drug crimes in recent years.<sup>21</sup>

## Drugs

- Marijuana and methamphetamine are the two major drugs of concern in American Samoa.<sup>22</sup>
- While marijuana is the most widely used illegal drug, methamphetamine causes the most problems in American Samoa.<sup>23</sup>
- Most methamphetamine users prefer to smoke the extremely pure (90-100% pure) crystal methamphetamine form known as “ice”.<sup>24</sup>
- The street price of “ice” in American Samoa is five times the price in Honolulu. In American Samoa, the price can range from \$50-75 per one-fifth of a gram, versus \$50 for a gram in Honolulu.<sup>25</sup>
- A single cigarette (“joint”) of Western Samoan marijuana sold in American Samoa costs from \$25-35. Much of the marijuana found in American Samoa comes from Western Samoa.<sup>26</sup>

## Juveniles

- Juvenile narcotic offenses have increased from 1 during 1996 to 7 during 2000.<sup>27</sup>

Number of Juvenile Offenses Known to Law Enforcement, American Samoa, 1996-2000

Selected Offenses	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Assault	23	8	23	30	20
Auto theft	1	2	-	-	-
Burglary	27	32	48	45	33
Larceny	14	20	19	26	17
Murder	-	1	-	-	-
Rape	1	-	-	1	1
Robbery	1	-	1	3	-
Drugs	1	-	4	7	7
Total	147	192	265	247	221

- During 1997 in American Samoa, 25.1% of high school students reported using marijuana within their lifetime. This percentage increased in 1999 to 31.5%.<sup>28</sup>

Percent of High School Students Using Selected Drugs, American Samoa, 1997 and 1999

Drug Type	1997	1999
Lifetime marijuana use	25.1%	31.5%
Current marijuana use	13.9	22.1
Lifetime cocaine use	6.1	6.7
Current cocaine use	3.2	3.8
Lifetime illegal steroid use	4.8	6.5
Lifetime injected drug use	2.1	3.7
Lifetime inhalant use	17.1	13.0
Tried marijuana before age 13 years	6.2	6.7

## **Enforcement**

- American Samoa Office of Territorial and International Criminal Intelligence and Drug Enforcement (OTICIDE)<sup>29</sup>  
OTICIDE is responsible for the gathering of intelligence information and enforcement of laws governing drug trafficking, white-collar crimes and related criminal activities. OTICIDE also investigates and coordinates the flow of criminal information with Federal, State, territorial, regional, and international law enforcement agencies.
- South Pacific Islands Criminal Intelligence Network (SPICIN)<sup>30</sup>  
Created in October 1987, SPICIN works to support the member police forces of the South Pacific Chiefs of Police Conference (SPCPC) in the information gathering, development and dissemination of crime-related information through the timely analysis and sharing of intelligence vital to law enforcement within the Pacific region. Members of the SPICIN include: American Samoa, Australia, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Kingdom of Tonga, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and Western Samoa.

## **Trafficking and Seizures<sup>31</sup>**

- Drug trafficking organizations and criminal groups often use the mail system (the US Postal Service), commercial airlines, and cargo vessels to smuggle drugs to American Samoa.
- According to law enforcement sources, methamphetamine labs may be present on American Samoa's islands.
- Most of the methamphetamine available in American Samoa comes from Hawaii.
- During FY 2000 (July 1, 1999 to June 30, 2000), territorial customs officials confiscated over 200 pounds of methamphetamine in American Samoa.
- Aside from local cultivators, much of the marijuana in American Samoa comes from Western Samoa, a neighboring independent nation.
- During FY 2000, territorial customs officials seized more than 10,000 pounds of marijuana in 22 seizures at the airport and ferry terminals.
- In October 2000, local customs officials seized more than 35 pounds of marijuana from a Western Samoa government-owned cargo vessel.

## **Courts**

- In 1999, American Samoa legislature passed laws making the possession of even small amounts of illegal drugs punishable by long jail terms with no possibility of parole.<sup>32</sup>
- First time offenders who commit a possession offense receive a mandatory five-year sentence with no possibility of parole.<sup>33</sup>
- During 2000, a total of 9,469 cases were filed in the District Court of American Samoa. About 87 percent were disposed of before the ending of the year.<sup>34</sup>
- Of the 668 cases filed in the High Court of American Samoa, 420 cases were disposed before the end of the year. About 2,762 cases were pending from the previous year.<sup>35</sup>

## Corrections

- During 1999, the average inmate population in the Tafuna Correctional facility was 150.<sup>36</sup>

## Sources

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- <sup>3</sup> Central Intelligence Agency, World Fact Book 2002, American Samoa:  
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- <sup>22</sup> National Drug Intelligence Center, *American Samoa Drug Threat Assessment*, June 2001:  
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- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>27</sup> American Samoa Department of Commerce Web site, *American Samoa 2000 Statistical Yearbook*:  
<http://www.amsamoa.com/2000YB/2000yearbookwebsite.htm>
- <sup>28</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States*, 1999 versus 1997:  
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The Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse  
PO Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
1-800-666-3332  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>  
[ondcp@ncjrs.org](mailto:ondcp@ncjrs.org)

